

POLICY ON STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

The National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) Constitution and Bylaws (Bylaws Article VII) allows for standard operating procedures (SOPs) to be created as deemed necessary by the NELAC Director, NELAC Board of Directors, and/or NELAC or National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) Committees in order to standardize the procedures relating to the functioning of the conference. The purpose of this policy is to describe the process for development, revisions, and adoption of a SOP.

DEVELOPMENT

The development of SOPs will be the responsibility of the NELAC or NELAP Committee for which the need resides or with a Special Committee, Task Force, or Study Group established by the NELAC Chair for the specific purpose of addressing a particular need within NELAC. To assure that all SOPs are consistent, the following procedures shall be used:

1. The guidance document issued by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) titled, "Guidance for the Preparation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)," EPA QA/G-6, shall be used for the structure and content required within the document.
2. All SOPs should use a header format structure that is left justified, as follows:
Short Title of SOP
Rev. #: _____
Date: _____
Page ____ of ____
3. Significant dates that should be noted at the bottom of the title page include the date of final review by the responsible committee and the date of final review by the NELAC Board of Directors. When a SOP receives a vote of confidence from the NELAC membership, the date of that approval should be noted, as well. For example:

Reviewed by: Standards Review Committee	June 1, 2004
NELAC Board of Directors	June 15, 2004
NELAC Approval	August 24, 2004
4. All SOPs will be indexed for reference purposes and electronic file name purposes. This system will be comprised of three letters to represent the committee, an underscore, and three-digit number to indicate the numerical order of SOPs developed within that committee. For example, if the NELAC Board of Directors developed their first SOP, the index would be BOD_001.

REVISIONS

SOPs developed by Standing NELAC or NELAP Committees shall be reviewed annually (i.e., prior to July 1st, as a new Standard is implemented each year). If any changes are needed, those changes shall be made prior to the new implementation year for adoption. For SOPs developed by a Special Committee, Task Force, or Study Group, the NELAC Chair will coordinate with the NELAC Board of Directors every two years to determine if a new Special Committee, Task Force, or Study Group should be formed to make necessary changes or to replace the existing SOP prior to the new implementation year for adoption.

ADOPTION

All SOPs that are developed for NELAC and/or NELAP shall be submitted to the NELAC Board of Directors for review. Once comments from the NELAC Board of Directors are addressed by the committee, all SOPs that are general in nature and do not significantly impact the way NELAC functions shall be posted on the NELAC website for use by the committee. If the SOP is not general in nature and will significantly impact the way NELAC functions, the posting of the SOP will be an interim step in line with the required posting requirements for voting eligibility by the NELAC membership at the annual meeting.